

Multiple Intelligence Literature Circles: A JFL and an EFL Experience

Michiko, Sai¹

Jeng-yih (Tim) Hsu

Department of Japanese

Department of English

National Kaohsiung First University of Science & Technology

Kaohsiung, Taiwan

msai@ccms.nkfust.edu.tw

gogotim@ccms.nkfust.edu.tw

Abstract

The idea of literature circles is not new; however, it is hardly adapted in a second language classroom. In Taiwan, using literature circles to teach a second/foreign language is even less seen. The two college teachers-researchers reported their experiences of trying out literature circles in a JFL (Japanese as a Foreign Language) and an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) class. During the one-semester teaching, they intended to answer the following three research questions: (1) What is the perceived effectiveness of literature circles in a JFL and an EFL course? (2) What are the factors determining the success of literature circles in a JFL and an EFL course? (3) How can these studies relate to later JFL and EFL courses in colleges and universities of Taiwan?

The findings of the study can be summarized as below: (1) the JFL group considered their literature circles class a slightly more effective than the EFL group; (2) the factors affecting the success of a literature circles class included students' self-selecting of reading materials, their preference toward discussion roles, allotted class time for real discussion, teachers' feedback on weekly journals, and grading policy; and 3) specifically for the needs of college JFL/EFL learners in Taiwan, the teachers-researchers call for multiple intelligence literature circles, believing that the MI-guided model will help literature circles to be better organized and more effectively implemented in a second/foreign language setting.

Keywords: literature circles, second language reading-writing connection, multiple intelligences, JFL & EFL education

¹ Dr. Michiko Sai is the first author and the correspondent for future contacts.

1. Introduction

Daniels (1994) brought up his innovative idea of literature circles and has persuaded many curriculum reformers (Henry, 1995; McMahon, 1997; McMahon & Raphael, 1997), pedagogists (Ali, 1994; Monson, 1995; Schlick Noe & Johnson, 1999), literacy experts (Burns, 1998; C. Day, 2004; Pitman, 1997), and L1 and L2 language acquisition researchers (Brock, 1997; Hancock, 2000; Hsu, 2003, 2004) to enthusiastically embrace such a unique teaching method. In his simplest definition, Daniels described literature circles as small, temporary discussion groups consisting of students who gather based on their selection to read the same text. While members assume specific responsibilities in preparation for the discussion, they come to the discussion with supporting notes according to their prescribed discussion roles. Upon the end of each reading cycle, student readers share their readings by conducting creative activities in a book fair; then form a group (whether with the same or new members, Daniels, 2001) to carry out another new phase of literature circles reading.

As the field of literacy education is enjoying the initial success of literature circles, some teachers have just begun to implement this method in a bigger scale empirical study (McElvain, 2005) or test-try with students of a second/foreign language (Hsu & Liu, 2005). Too much is still left unanswered in spite of the previous reports from a few single classroom experiences or studies conducted in the first language based American (D. Day, 2002; Wilson, 2004) or Canadian (Ricky, 1992) classrooms. It is the attempt of this current study to initiate a joint study to examine how two college classes—a JFL (Japanese as a Foreign Language) and an EFL (English as a Foreign Language)—could actually benefit from the implementation of literature circles.

2. Current Development of Literature Circles

2.1 Early Success of Literature Circles in the United States

Drawing on early education reformers and psychologists in the US, Daniels (1994, 2001) believes that many principles, such as reader response theory (Guerin, Willingham, Labor, Morgan, & Reesman, 1998; Rosenblatt, 1995), collaborative learning, Vygotskian scaffolding theory, and reading-writing connection, underpin literature circles, thus guaranteeing the foreseeable success of such course model. Even so, the first group of classroom-centered studies did not start till the works of Bloem (1997) and Bowron (2001) came along. In a case study, Bloem looked at young adults' response toward international literature in literature circles. Bowron, however, applied literature circles as a trail model with her colleagues for getting their first-hand experience. The two studies both yielded positive results on the group-oriented format of reading discussions.

Nevertheless, the untouched core question—how literature circles can possibly enhance students’ reading, writing, or even literacy altogether—was suspended until a scholar, McElvain (2005) from University of San Francisco bravely took the challenge to solve the puzzle. In her doctoral research, McElvain led a group of mainstream elementary school teachers to try what they called “transactional literature circles” with many at-risk English learners. In a 9-month period, the 13 experimental classes improved positively in contrast with the other control classes. Many standard literacy tests of California State were also adapted to support her findings, showing that literature-circle based curriculum did actually help students in her elementary school to increase in reading comprehension, confidence, and retention of important ideas from texts.

Though earlier than McElvain’s study, the very first L2 literature circle was reported by Samway and Whang’s (1996) based on their experience with multicultural students. Their experiment on multicultural literature circles however brought up more classroom tips than concrete results. Samway and Whang suggested: (1) student’s native language should be respected and their contribution in native language to the group should be valued; (2) the degree to which a student is comfortable with speaking English should be respected; and (3) other students can act as translators when some students can not use one language to communicate fluently even when translation is difficult for them.

In summary, the study results accumulated up to this moment are mainly from American mainstream classroom. Samway and Whang’s case, though with an L2 focus, can be strictly examined as a case of ESL setting in which the target language is still English.

2.2 Pioneers of Second Language Literature Circles

On the other side of the Pacific, several Taiwanese scholars have noticed the phenomena of literature circles; many even initiated formal studies. Of the earlier works, the emphasis was placed merely around L1 literacy (Wang, 2002) as well as learners’ self-construction of meanings (Y. Lin, 1995). The study by Hsu and Liu (2005) could be considered as a great effort but reported nothing more than a pilot study with a very small group (i.e., 18 freshmen of English majors) of college participants.

The advocates of L2 literature circles finally found their comfort after seeing the study conducted by a graduate student, Lin (2006), in southern Taiwan. In Lin’s 15-week semester experiment, as a teacher-researcher, she led 25 fifth graders of Chinese-English bilingual programs to run through several cycles of literature circles. The effects of literature circles (LC, according to Lin) were explored by Lin from 4 aspects: (1) the effect of the LC on the students’ reading comprehension; (2) the effect

of the LC on the student responses to reading children's literature; (3) the student responses to the selected reading materials; and (4) the student overall evaluation on toward the LC program. Drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data, Lin reported that her students improved in their comprehension for reading, development of reading strategies, interest of literary works, and all valued the model of L2 literature circles. Lin went further to suggest:

1. Teachers of English can adopt children's literature as teaching materials in EFL instructions to foster the development of literacy and lifelong readers.
2. Literature circles can be a balanced literacy approach for teachers to improve students' reading interests and strategies, and to incorporate many different perspectives of learning.
3. Teachers can implement literature circles to elicit higher-order, student-centered and open-ended learning autonomy (Lin, 2006, p. III).

As promising as it may seem, this is very encouraging at this moment to follow the path of early pioneers of L2 literature circles, particularly in the environment of EFL where a target language is only used inside the classroom. Lin's (2006) success with elementary bilingual readers may just open up new possibilities for other EFL learners and in-service teachers of any second foreign language.

2.3 Significance of the Study

The current study plans to go further by bringing Lin's (2006) study model to the setting of a university of science and technology in southern Taiwan; it is unique in many ways. It is the first EFL literature circle model to be implemented with learners of English majors at a Taiwanese university. It is also a study jointed by a JFL class where Japanese majors at the same university are learning Japanese as a foreign language. Since there is no any other college classrooms where literature circles can be found, the two teachers must take on the dual role as teachers-researchers throughout the study.

The intent of the study aims for the community of second language literacy education as the two teachers-researchers attempt to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the perceived effectiveness of literature circles in a JFL and an EFL course?
- (2) What are the factors determining the success of literature circles in a JFL and an EFL course?
- (3) How can these studies relate to later JFL and EFL courses in colleges and universities of Taiwan?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants, Setting, and Course Procedures

The participants of this study were 14 senior-year Japanese majors and 26 first-year English major freshmen in a mid-size national university of science and technology in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. While all 14 students in the JFL class were female, 23 females and 3 males participated in the EFL class. Both JFL and EFL classes were reading intensive courses. The official title for the JFL was “Introduction to Japanese Language Education;” the EFL was “Selected Readings of American and British Literature.” Both JFL and EFL courses were two-credit elective course, the 2 classes met two hours per week and were designed with an aim at enhancing students’ L2 reading and writing skills. The only minor difference between these 2 groups of L2 students can be their beginning point of official learning of the target L2 languages. Because students in Taiwan started taking formal English as their first foreign language in junior high schools, the group of EFL students’ training began 6 years before the study took place. On the contrast, the group of JFL began their formal classes of Japanese from the 1st year of senior high school. However, as they have stayed in the university for 3 consecutive years, their learning years of Japanese as a foreign language happened to be 6 years in total length, exactly like their counterparts of the EFL group. Still, the JFL students were considered much more mature than their EFL counterparts as far as their average age was concerned.

This joint study lasted approximately fifteen weeks. The 2 teachers-researchers both used literature circles as the teaching approach in their courses. They taught their courses separately and held routine meetings weekly after each class. The JFL teacher was a native speaker of Japanese whereas the EFL teacher was a non-native speaker of English. The JFL and EFL courses went through the identical steps in the entire research period. The first cycle of literature circles was led by the teachers-researchers in order to help students understand. Following the demonstration, all the participants read three assigned articles and one self-selected book, forming their small reading groups, discussing with members based on the role sheets designed by Daniels (1994; 2001), writing response journals, and sharing their group-chosen book as a final project to the whole class. Finally, the students filled in a post-course questionnaire and were interviewed by a research assistant upon leaving this course.

3.2 Instruments

Instruments in this study included: (1) The post-course questionnaires on the student attitudes toward Japanese/English learning and literature circles, (2) 4 literature circles role sheets adapted from Daniels (1994; 2001) (see Appendix A), (3)

students journals, and (4) the research assistant's post-course interviews (see Appendix B).

3.2.1 Post-course Questionnaires

The post-study questionnaire was first written in Chinese (and later translated into English for this study report). It helped the teachers-researchers to gain valuable information about the students' interests in the reading material, their attitudes toward English learning, and their responses to the application of literature circle in L2 reading classroom. Basically, there are 6 sections in the questionnaire concerning student attitudes toward: (1) the course, (2) literature circles, (3) the discussion roles, (4) the selected articles, (5) journal writings, and (6) students' performance assessment. The level of student satisfaction is represented by a 7-point Likert scale. Table 1 illustrates the design of the questionnaire.

Table 1

Design of the Post-course Questionnaire

Question Types		Question items	Number of questions
Section I	Attitudes toward the course in general	No. 1-12	12
Section II	Attitudes toward literature circles	No. 13-36	24
Section III	Attitudes toward discussion roles	No. 37-43	7
Section IV	Likes/Dislikes of reading materials	No. 44-56	13
Section V	Attitudes toward journal writings	No. 57-77	21
Section VI	Student performance assessment	No. 78-90	9
	Total	90	90

3.2.2 Discussion Role Sheets

Four role sheets developed by Daniels (1994; 2001) were adapted. They included discussion director, literary luminary, illustrator, and connector. A discussion director had the responsibility to start with good discussion questions and invited for other group member's contributions or comments. A literary luminary needed to read aloud for the group members the memorable passages of text that were interesting, powerful or important. An illustrator invited students to draw a scene, graphic or nonlinguistic response to the reading text; it might include sketching, drawing cartoons, diagrams, stick figures or flow charts. A connector showed people the relationship between the texts and personal life or experiences which had happened in the real world.

All of the roles of literature circles were explained and demonstrated by the teachers first. Then the students were advised to take turns playing different roles in

literature circles each time. Students bring their written responses or role sheets and use these as guides for discussion.

3.2.3 Student Journals

Journal writing is not required by Daniels (2001) in his model of literature circles. However, in order to help students develop a greater and deeper awareness of their reading texts, the teachers-researchers encouraged their students to write their reactions or reflections on each material in their journals. The journal was viewed as a tool to help students make personal responses and create meanings of what they had read. The content of journal might include summarizing the story, sharing a feeling or response, connecting their personal experiences with the texts, asking a question, making an interpretation, creating a new ending, or drawing a picture or diagram related to the texts. The purpose of the response journal was to help them reflect what they have thought about their chosen books or any reading materials. While writing responses, they were forced to look closely at the text, thus improving their comprehension. When examining student journals, the main emphasis was placed on expressions of meanings at a deeper level; therefore, mechanical errors were ignored unless they interfered with comprehension.

The teachers-researchers collected, read, and responded to these writing pieces weekly. At the end of the semester, the students collected all of their journals into portfolios so that the teachers could check again to realize how his students wrote and see if there was any progress in reading and writing. Finally, the teacher gave students a chart of self-evaluation, inviting the students to co-grade the journals together at the end.

3.2.4 Post-course Interviews

On the very last day of the two courses, an outside research assistant was invited to conduct informal interviews with the 2 groups of students about their experiences with the literature circles. The post-course interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The research assistant used a broad transcription with the focus on what students said, ignoring details such as length of pauses and intonation. The purpose of the interviews was to investigate the students' viewpoints and further suggestions for literature circles adapted in this study. The interview questions were semi-structured and centered on specific aspects, such as the students' perceptions toward literature circles and English learning, how literature circles could have benefited students' English learning, reading, and writing, and any further suggestions or improvements for the implementation of literature circle in future studies.

4. Data Collection & Analysis

In the beginning of the spring semester of 2006, the teachers-researchers introduced the course model of literature circles to the students. In each JFL and EFL class, the students were later divided into several groups of 4 to 6 and they were allowed to choose their own partners. Next, the teachers-researchers led the first cycle of literature circles. The 2 groups of JFL and EFL students began to run their cycles of literature circles independently.

As for the choice of reading materials, the 2 teachers-researchers both assigned 3 required articles and had their students choose one independent text to be read within each group. In each case, both JFL and EFL classes read 3 assigned articles (in the second cycle of literature circles) and conducted 1 small-group selected book (in the third cycle of literature circles). The data of the study was collected and reported qualitatively. The major stages for this study can be summarized by Table 2:

Table 2

Major Stages for the JFL and EFL Literature Circles

Stage 1: Recruiting students

Stage 2: Dividing the class into groups of four to six students

Stage 3: Teacher-led literature circles (Cycle 1)

Stage 4: Reading the 3 assigned articles (Cycle 2)

Stage 5: Reading the self-selected book (Cycle 3)

Stage 6: Student journals due; self-evaluation

Stage 7: Post-course questionnaires & interviews

Stage 8: Coding and analyzing the data

5. Results and Discussions

5.1 Perceived Effectiveness of Literature Circles in a JFL and an EFL Course

The answers to the effectiveness of JFL and EFL literature circle courses were drawn mainly from the post-course questionnaires and interviews, and secondarily from student journals. While the 7-point Likert scale was adapted to describe the

questionnaires, the students' direct quotes were used to report their evaluation of the courses.

As indicated by Table 1, the post-course questionnaires consisted of 6 sections, each of which help reveal the students' overall feelings toward the courses. Table 3 below lists the students' evaluation on the two literature circle courses.

Table 3

Students' Evaluation on the JFL and EFL Literature Circle Courses based on a 7-point Likert Scale Post-course Questionnaire

Question Types		JFL	EFL
Section I	Attitudes toward the course in general	6.22**	6.02**
Section II	Attitudes toward literature circles	5.78	5.73
Section III	Attitudes toward discussion roles	5.93	4.97*
Section IV	Likes/Dislikes of reading materials	4.98*	5.39
Section V	Attitudes toward journal writings	6.12	5.53
Section VI	Student performance assessment	5.80	5.65
The Course	Overall Average	5.805	5.548

Note. The asterisk * indicates the lowest score whereas the double asterisks ** indicate the highest in each of the JFL and EFL courses.

Evidently, it is obvious to see the JFL group valued the course more than their EFL counterpart as they gave the highest score, 6.22, to their Japanese literature circle reading course. If comparing holistically by averaging each section, the JFL group's given score is still a bit higher than the EFL's (i.e., 5.805 vs. 5.548). Nevertheless, it is observable that the 2 groups did like the idea of literature circles with a close to 80% satisfaction rate (83% for JFL; 79% for EFL).

The data from student interviews can be divided into 3 major parts: positive, neutral, and negative comments. As the students indicated in their post-course questionnaires that they considered these 2 courses effective, only the positive comments from both of the JFL and EFL courses were selected and reported here. The negative student comments are to be further discussed when investigating the possible factors which affect the two literature circle courses. Table 4 below lists the collective major samples of student comments on the courses.

Table 4

Positive Student Comments on the JFL and EFL Literature Circle Courses

-
- We have a very strong sense of responsibility to read, to discuss, and to finish our assignments. (EFL)
- We decide our amount of reading. This is never possible in any of my previous courses. (EFL)
- I like the freedom of self-generated discussion questions. Unlike the traditional reading classes, we can only follow the textbooks or teachers. (EFL)
- The in-class discussion is really fun. I don't need to listen to long lectures. I feel I can focus more than I used to. (EFL)
- I really enjoy my members' ideas. Every time when we are in our group, they always have so much to share. After listening to them, I will go back to reread the book again. (EFL)
- Things I am too shy to ask the teacher can be shared among my group members. I think I am becoming more confident in reading a foreign language. (JFL)
- Learning is now fun. I feel secured because I have a group to support me (JFL)
- People talk about student center all the time, but this is the first course I ever have. (JFL)
- I feel I can remember what I read for a longer period of time, and I think it's the discussion I had with my group that helped me remember.(JFL)
- Somehow I feel I will decide to read in Japanese on my own even without my teacher telling me to. (JFL)
-

From the positive comments above, this study also revealed responses similar to those of Lin's (2006) study. Lin found her students benefited from the model of literature circles in that their reading comprehension, interest of literary works improved. Our students reported the same things and even added that their memory of the previously read text became stronger.

The new add-in component, reading journals, was also considered valuable as they received relatively high scores from JFL group (i.e., 6.12, though EFL group only gave a 5.53, see Table 3). However, the teachers-researchers' consistent feedback on their journals did not seem to reveal too much from the student side. That is to say, only limited data can be found from the students' weekly journals with regard to their perceived effectiveness of the courses. It could be due to the reason that the students were clearly directed to write by following their group discussions as well as the 4 role sheets. Their literary responses were limited to the texts, thus yielding nothing directly to the course. The only suggestion made by one EFL student was that she was asking for permission to conduct independent reading on her own.

Judging from this case, we find it encouraging as it could have been a sign of student autonomy within the setting of literature circles.

5.2 Factors Determining the Success of Literature Circles in a JFL and an EFL Course?

In the post-course questionnaires, the participants from both classes did express their satisfaction of the literature circles. Nevertheless, in spite of the overall success, one dissatisfying component in each course could still be found—reading materials in JFL and discussion roles in EFL as they received the lowest scores among the course component evaluation (see Table 3). These two issues were further clarified during the post-course interview conducted by the outside research assistant.

5.2.1 Students' Self-selected Materials and Preference toward Discussion Roles

The JFL students found selecting reading materials on their own extremely difficult. They felt that choosing a book ideally suitable for the course on “Introduction to Japanese Language Education” could have been beyond their training. They did not find themselves ready or well-trained to conduct this task independently. They still believed their teacher should select or at least recommended some possible lists of books for them to choose from. In the meanwhile, the EFL students' unhappiness derived from their resistance to the discussion roles. They were very upset when being assigned a role they could not perform well. For instance, many EFL students said they were unconfident in drawing so they always wanted to avoid the illustrator role. Some others were trying to trade their “discussion roles” away because they did not enjoy leading a discussion on their own. Daniels (1994; 2001) asserts clearly that rotating discussion roles helps students to approach the same reading materials from different perspectives. From the EFL group responses, we were facing a dilemma as we were uncertain if the priority should be given to students' acceptance of the idea of literature circles or student satisfaction of the courses. We would probably need to conduct a series of additional studies in order to solve this problem and make a justifiable decision.

5.2.2 Journal Writings

As indicated by the 7-point Likert scale in Table 3, a stronger dissatisfaction of the literature circle courses was reported by the EFL group. A closer look at the questionnaire results showed that the second lowest component as rated by the EFL learners was journal writings. While the JFL group did not report any negative responses on the journal, EFL group had listed several reasons why they did not enjoy keeping the journals. In their post-course interview, they indicated that number

of pages demanded by the EFL teacher, feedback, and grading policy affected their evaluation on this assignment.

Unlike the JFL teacher, the EFL teacher specified the pages he anticipated by the end of this course. Although he explained on the first day that he simply wanted to give the students a little pressure to write on, he was hoping to see a package of 50-page A-4 journals eventually if the students wanted to receive a high score. The clearly pre-determined page number did not turn the pressure into encouragement but increase only anxiety. Many EFL students felt the page limit somehow discouraged them and found many classmates were just trying to get their pages going in order to get a better final score. As a result, the EFL group not only felt stressful about weekly journal writing but also wondered if the grading policy was designed objectively. Too much fear somehow took away their concentration on the EFL teacher's feedback, jeopardizing the original purpose of journal writings, i.e. to provide a chance for the student readers to reflect, re-read, and interact with the texts as well the classroom teacher. Some students from the EFL class told the research assistant that many group members were even writing their journals in class, so they could not find enough time to conduct quality discussions in their own circles from time to time.

To sum up, all the accumulated factors that might have affected the 2 literature circle based courses include students' self-selecting of reading materials, their preference toward discussion roles, allotted class time for real discussion, teachers' feedback on weekly journals, and grading policy

5.3 Relation between the JEF and EFL Courses and Future Literature Circle Model Courses in Colleges and Universities of Taiwan

Based on the results collected from questionnaires, role sheets, journal writings, and interviews, the 2 literature circle model L2 courses were relatively successful. It seems comforting to see the 2 group of L2 students both like the design and accepted the 2 teachers, whether a native or non-native speaker of the target L2, in their 1 semester course together. As the two teachers-researchers, we would encourage the other reading teachers in colleges and universities to try literature circles in their own classrooms.

However, we will propose a new type of "customerized literature circles." Originally, Daniels (1994, 2001) has never required his students to write or keep weekly journals, an add-in component in these 2 courses of the current study. L2 teachers may need to reconsider whether they want to include this course requirement. In addition, training your students to select reading materials and accept playing different discussion roles could be also the new challenges classroom teachers must face each time you teach a new group of students. We would suggest that each class

begins with a careful and detailed needs and reading/writing habits analysis. Only a series of cautious and continuous adjustments are made consistently can we guarantee the success of a second language literature circle. Designing a tailor-made course for each and every of our new classes is not just a job we are good at but one kind of accomplishment we teachers must achieve proudly every new semester of our entire teaching career.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This current study had many limitations. They were merely 2 initial short-period courses conducted in a semester course. Bigger scale and longer length studies should be encouraged to test if L2 literature circles are favored and doable to a larger student audience such as the reading courses of an entire foreign language department in a college or university. In addition, unlike McElvain's study (2005) in which standardized literacy tests were adapted to examine whether students' reading and writing proficiency had improved. The present study failed to design a reading comprehension test, comparable to be used in each course, enabling the researchers to investigate whether their students did become a better reader after taking this course. Therefore, a better contrastive study should be done by comparing 2 or more courses of the same foreign language. Lastly, students used their L1 in the two courses as we followed the examples of "bilingual" instruction (Samway & Whang, 1996; Lin, 2006). We were not sure if "L2-only" policy might have revealed different results.

Based on the two courses, we are actually raising a bigger and tougher issue on the applicability of L2 literature circles. Throughout the entire course process, we were often caught between following and reforming the original design of literature circles. We believe that being flexible is the key essence in every second language classroom of the post-method era. Therefore, we are leaving the decision to every teacher who is willing to test try literature circles. A recent new view on literature circle is brought out by many American first language teachers. Among many, "multiple intelligence literature circles" has been discussed constantly (Oliveira, 2002). Gardner proposes every learner possesses many types of intelligences (8 to be exact, Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and they can be developed when chances are given. Daniels (1994) encourages every student to take on a new role each time in order to learn from to interpret the reading texts from multiple perspectives. We, as two skeptical teachers-researchers, remain conservative on these claims and assumptions. Approaching second language literature circles from a more of an eclecticism position, we believe it is still far from finalizing an ideal literature circle course model to be implemented universally in every second language classroom. It will still take

tremendous efforts from many enthusiastic teachers, researchers, and pedagogists to finally come to the point.

References

- Alis, S. (1994). The reader-response approach: An alternative for teaching literature in a second language. *Journal of Reading*, 37, 288-296.
- Bloem, P. L. (1997). A case study of American young adult response to international literature. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kent State University.
- Bowron, R. K. (2001). How teachers' use of literature circles reflects a transactional view of reading. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Auburn University.
- Brock, C. H. (1997). Exploring the use of book club with second-language learners in mainstream classrooms. In I. S. McMahon, T. E. Raphael, V. J. Goatley, & L. S. Pardo (Eds.), *The book club connection*, (pp. 141-158). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Burns, B. (1998). *Changing the classroom climate with literature circles*. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 42(2), 124-130.
- Daniels, H. (1994). *Literature circles: voice and choice in the student centered classroom*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Daniels, H. (2001). *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*. Stenhouse Publishers: York, Manie, USA.
- Day, C. (2004). *Reading and responding in literature circles*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 480 271).
- Day, D. L. (2002). 'A taste of teaching': *Preservice teachers and children engage in literature circles*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona.
- Guerin, W., Willingham, J., Labor, E., Morgan, L., & Reesman, J. (1998). *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hancock, M. J. (2000). *A celebration of literature and response: Children, books, and teachers in K-8 classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Henry, J. (1995). *If not now: developmental readers in the college classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton-Cook.
- Hsu, J-Y. (2003). Reading together: Student teacher meet in literature circles. *The Proceedings of the 2003 National Conference on English Teaching and Learning* (pp.1-9), Huwei Institute of Technology, Huwei, Taiwan. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 493 021)
- Hsu, J-Y. (2004). Reading without teachers: Literature circles in an EFL classroom. *The Proceedings of 2004 Cross-Strait Conference on English Education* (pp. 401-421), National Chiayi University, Chiayi, Taiwan. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 492 558)

Hsu, J-Y & Liu, S-Y. (2005). *Faulker's Emily revives: Experimenting literature circles with Taiwanese college students*. Paper presented at the 22nd International Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan.

Lin, S-J. (2006). *The effects of literature circles on EFL learning of children in a bilingual class*. Unpublished master dissertation, Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan.

Lin, Y-P. (1995). *Meaning construction through literature circles: A study of six third-grade readers*. Unpublished master dissertation, Province University, Taiwan.

McElvain, C. (2005). *Transactional Literature Circles and the reading comprehension of at-risk English learners in the mainstream classroom*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco.

McMahon, S. I. (1997). Book clubs: Contexts for students to lead their discussions. In I. S. McMahon, T. E. Raphael, V. J. Goatley, & L. S. Pardo (Eds.), *The book club connection*, (pp. 89-106). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

McMahon, S. I., & Raphael, T. E. (1997). The book club program: Theoretical and research foundations. In I. S. McMahon, T. E. Raphael, V. J. Goatley, & L. S. Pardo (Eds.), *The book club connection*, (pp. 3-25). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Monson, D (1995). Choosing Books for Literature Circles. In B.C. Hill, N.J. Johnson, & K.L. Schlick Noe (Eds.), *Literature circles and response*, (pp. 113-127). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Oliveria, A. (2002). Literature circles and multiple intelligences: A cooperative approach to reading texts. *MET*, 11(3), 39-41.

Pitman, M. (1997). Literature circles. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 416 503).

Richards J. C. & T. S. Rogers (2001). Approaches and methods in language teaching (2nd edition). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Rickey, M. J. (1992). *Literature circles in process in elementary classrooms*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). *Literature as exploration* (Fifth edition). New York, NY: MLA of America.

Samway, K. D., & Whang, G. (1996). *Literature study circles in a multicultural classroom*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Schlick Noe, K. L. & Johnson, N. J. (1999). *Getting started with literature circles*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Wang, Y-H. (2002). *The effects of group discussion on EFL reading comprehension instruction*. Unpublished master dissertation, Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan.

Wilson, T. (2004). *Bringing memory forward: Teachers' engagements with constructions of 'difference' in teacher literature circles*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Victoria, Canada.

APPENDIX A—Literature Circles Role Sheet

DISCUSSION DIRECTOR (Required)²**Name:** _____**Group:** _____**Book:** _____**Meeting Date:** _____**Assignment:** page _____ to page _____

Discussion Director: Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details: your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read, which you can list below, during or after your reading. Or you may use some of the general questions below to develop topics for your group.

Possible discussion questions or topics for today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sample questions:

What was going through your mind while you read this?

How did you feel while reading this part of the book?

What was discussed in this section of the book?

Can someone summarize briefly?

Did today's reading remind you of any real-life experiences?

What questions did you have when you finished this section?

Did anything in this section of the book surprise you?

What are the one or two most important ideas?

Predict some things you think will be talked about next.

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow _____

Assignment for tomorrow: page _____ to page _____

² Adapted from Daniels (1994; 2001).

LITERARY LUMINARY (Required)³**Name:** _____**Group:** _____**Book:** _____**Meeting Date:** _____**Assignment: page** _____ **to page** _____

Literary Luminary: Your job is to locate a few special sections of the text that your group would like to hear aloud. The idea is to help people remember some interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text. You decide which passages or paragraphs are worth hearing, and then jot plans for how they should be shared. You can read passages aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read them silently and then discuss.

Location		Reason for Picking	Plan for Reading
Page	Paragraph		

Possible reasons for picking a passage to be shared:

Important	Informative	Surprising
Controversial	Funny	Well written
Confusing	Thought-provoking	

Others:

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow _____

Assignment for tomorrow: page _____ **to page** _____

³ Adapted from Daniels (1994; 2001).

ILLUSTRATOR (Required)⁴**Name:** _____**Group:** _____**Book:** _____**Meeting Date:** _____**Assignment:** page _____ to page _____

Illustrator: Your job is to draw some kind of picture related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that's discussed specifically in your book, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Any kind of drawing or graphic is okay—you can even label things with words if that helps. **Make your drawing on the other side of this sheet or on a separate sheet.**

Presentation plan: When the Discussion director invites your participation, you may show your picture without comment to the others in the group. One at a time, they get to speculate what your picture means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your picture means, where it came from, or what it represents to you.

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow _____

Assignment for tomorrow: page _____ to page _____

⁴ Adapted from Daniels (1994; 2001).

CONNECTOR (Required)⁵**Name:** _____**Group:** _____**Book:** _____**Meeting Date:** _____**Assignment: page** _____ **to page** _____

Connector: Your job is to find connections between the book your group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting the reading to your own life, to happenings at school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You might also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author. There are no right answers here—whatever the reading connects **you** with is worth sharing!

Some connections I found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Topic to be carried over to tomorrow _____

Assignment for tomorrow: page _____ to page _____

⁵ Adapted from Daniels (1994; 2001).

APPENDIX B—Literature Circles Follow-up Interview Questions

1. What are your general attitudes toward Literature Circles? Do you enjoy this teaching approach, and what are the reasons?
2. Do you like to choose books and decide the amount, the manner, and the content of reading and discussion by yourself?
3. What are the differences between Literature Circles and traditional teaching approach, such as classroom atmosphere, interaction between the teacher and the students, and the effects of learning? In addition, Literature Circles is student-centered, and traditional teaching approach is teacher-centered, which one do you like?
4. How do you think about the activities help you comprehend the reading articles?
5. Do you like to speak in English during the discussion? Or will you attempt to use this way to discuss with your partners?
6. Do you have better reading comprehension, or can you realize the reading content from different points of view through the group discussion? Can you share it with us?
7. Have you changed your reading habits, attitudes, and motivations after reading over one semester?
8. Have you made progress on reading or reading strategies?
9. Do you promote your English proficiency such as reading and writing abilities after writing reflective journals for one semester?
10. What are the differences or progresses (such as the length of the content) by comparing the first and the last journals?
11. What are your suggestions for further study?